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A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL

OF

MRS. D. W. V. FISKE,

FEBRUARY 21, 1844.

BY

REV. HEMAN HUMPHREY, D. D.
PRESIDENT OF AMHERST COLLEGE.

AMHERST:
J. S. & C. ADAMS, PUBLISHERS.
1844.

7

THE following discourse, delivered at the interment of MRS. DEBORAH W. V. FISKE, wife of the REV. NATHAN W. FISKE, who fell asleep, Feb. 19th, 1844, in hope of a glorious immortality, is now published by request. The theme, it will be admitted by all, is one of deep and permanent interest; and the writer feels assured, that its appropriateness to the occasion, will not be questioned by any, who were intimately acquainted with the deceased. The leading thoughts and sentiments I have long desired a fitting opportunity to express; and my humble hope is that, far as the discourse falls below my conception of what it ought to be, God who uses what instruments he pleases, reserving "the excellency of the power" to himself, will own the imperfect endeavor, and make it subserve the all important interests of those domestic and sacred relations which it contemplates.

AMHERST COLLEGE, *March* 1, 1844.

FUNERAL SERMON.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—Proverbs xxxi. 10 and 30.

The profitableness of funeral discourses has sometimes been questioned, by persons of deep piety and careful observation. They think it would be easy to show, that many of the most admired sermons of this class are *more* than unprofitable — that they are positively injurious to the living, without the possibility of benefiting the dead. That this may be the case, every reflecting mind will readily perceive. If the preacher merges himself for the occasion in the orator and the eulogist—if his main design is, "to garnish the sepulchres even of the

righteous," rather than to magnify the grace of God that was in them; and above all, if he burns incense to wit, or beauty, or rank, or any "golden image" which the deceased may set up, and commits "him that serveth God and him that serveth him not," alike to the grave, in hope of a glorious resurrection—he dishonors his Master, forfeits his commission, administers a deadly opiate to the consciences of sinners, and dyes his own skirts with their blood. He who "stands between the living and the dead" occupies a post of fearful responsibility. When a minister is called to perform the last sad offices in the house of mourning, it were infinitely better to be as silent as the corpse before him, than to decorate it with fulsome panegyrics — to adorn it with virtues, which even the partiality of friendship could never discover, till death revealed them; or to utter a syllable which might encourage the hopes of the living, while yet in their sins.

But as it is right for us to mourn, when the virtuous and the good are taken away from the

The subject of my discourse therefore, will be,

The importance and amiableness of the domestic virtues, especially of devoted piety in wives and mothers.

I am not about to deprecate those personal attractions and accomplishments which are so much admired for their own sakes. Under the control of delicacy and good sense, even in the absence of vital religion, they exert a softening and conservative influence upon society. They are the sunshine of many happy families. Their possessors often discharge the duties of daughters, wives and mothers, in a manner which might put to the blush some females of high religious pretensions. At the same time, it is a matter of common observation, that mere personal charms, however much they may be extolled and admired, soon fade; and that no accidental attractions can secure either permanent love or respect without an inward basis of moral excellence to sustain them. *Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised.* Her bright eye and comely features, such a woman will think little of. Her "adorning is not the outward adorning of plait-

ing the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel; but it is the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

While the more attractive external gifts of nature to the few are not to be despised, they are by no means essential to the highest domestic accomplishments; and whether with or without them, a virtuous woman, a woman that fears the Lord, and is adorned with the lovely graces of meekness, humility, gentleness, charity, industry, fortitude, cheerfulness, and devotion—the price of such a woman is above rubies. She is a crown to her husband; the lightener of his cares; the soother of his troubled spirit; the joy of his heart. The world may frown, but she will smile; and the darker its frowns the brighter and more cheering her smiles. Disappointments and reverses may thwart his best concerted plans—his estate may suddenly "take to itself wings and fly away"—false hearted friends may forsake, or betray him—but while he has "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and such a

home as a virtuous, discreet and pious wife alone knows how to make and adorn, he has reason to count himself eminently favored of the Lord. In the society and perennial cheerfulness of such a companion, he cannot long be unhappy, unless he deserves it. While his proud spirit would, but for her interposing fortitude and affection, be crushed by treachery, or misfortune, she can descend with dignity and grace from affluence to honest penury; from the mansion to the cottage, and soon make the latter in many respects the more happy and attractive abode of the two. How often do sudden reverses drive men of strong minds, even to despair and suicide; but how rarely, if ever, does a virtuous and pious wife relinquish the hope that they shall see brighter days, or fail of proving to her husband, that if they cannot recover what they have lost, she can be contented and happy without it.

Is he immersed in exhausting and perplexing business, or overwhelmed by professional duties and responsibilites, she is ever studying how she may relieve him of those domestic cares, which

but for her cheerful aid, would greatly embarrass and discourage him.

Is he sick, she is as a ministering angel, always by his bedside, encouraging him by her hopes, bathing his throbbing temples, and by a quickness of discernment, with which none but females are gifted, anticipating all his wants.

Is he absent, she bears him continually on her heart at the throne of grace, and by her prayers, I nothing doubt, wards off many dangers to which he is exposed. Does he return in safety, her closet testifies her gratitude to God for that protection which he alone can give, from "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day."

Is he at last laid upon his dying bed, how astonishingly does she bear up under watching and nursing and secret grief. With what heroic and pious devotion does she go down with him as he enters the dark valley, and onward to the very brink of Jordan; and if he have a kindred spirit, how much reason have we to believe, that her effectual fervent prayers avail much, in helping him safely over, and opening to him the gates of

the celestial city. What a precious gift of heaven, is such a companion in life and in death! *Her price is above rubies.*

Is she a mother? Her domestic virtues and devoted piety are equally attractive, and not less important in the education of her children. It is a common remark, that mothers, even where both parents are pious, do much more than fathers, towards molding the dispositions and forming the character of their offspring: and it is true. One striking proof of it is, that while fathers, if not seconded by mothers, are rarely successful in the religious education of their children, pious and discreet mothers often succeed, with little or no aid from fathers—yea in spite of strong counteracting influences. A father may be dissipated, may be a drunkard, an idler, a spendthrift,—and yet if he has a prudent and pious wife at home, the children may possibly, in spite of him, be "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" but let the mother drink and be a slattern, and there is no hope, be the father what he may. They will inevitably be ruined, unless they are early withdrawn from

her society and influence. The house is infected with leprosy from top to bottom, and they cannot stay there without having the plague spots break out all over them.

When I say that so much more depends upon mothers than upon fathers in family education, I do not mean to intimate that fathers have only a subordinate part to act; much less do I intend to justify them, in throwing the whole responsibility upon mothers. It is quite too common for men, in public and professional life, especially, to excuse themselves from bestowing much time upon the care and instruction of their children, by the plea, that they are too much occupied with more important duties. But what duties can be more important, than training up the rising generation in habits of virtue, industry and piety—than teaching them to "fear God and keep his commandments." On what page of the Bible do fathers, of any class or profession, find their warrant for shifting off the whole burden of domestic education upon their wives? Are the commands of scripture on this head addressed to mothers only, or even chiefly? Is there any intimation in

the word of God, that he ever intended to lay the whole responsibility upon mothers? On the contrary, are not fathers, as the divinely constituted heads of their respective families, more particularly addressed and made answerable? Let us turn to the Bible and see. Eph. vi. 4. "Ye *fathers*, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Gen. xviii. 19. "For I know *Abraham*, that he will command his children and household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." Deut. vi. 6, 7. "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." 1. Sam. iii. 12, 13. "In that day I will perform against *Eli*, all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not."

Now can any father, who reads these passages with the slightest attention, excuse himself from taking a prominent part in the education and government of his children, and leave the mother to teach and manage them as best she can—or in other words, leave her to do *his* duty as well as her own? This is not the Divine arrangement, and God will never give it his sanction. He has committed the bringing up of families to father and mother, jointly and severally, and given them both as much as they can do. It is only when one parent is necessarily absent, or is disabled by sickness, or removed by death, that the whole burden and responsibility must fall upon the other.

At the same time, it is a great and most interesting *fact*, that children are far more indebted to their mothers than to their fathers, for early religious training and impressions. Exceptions there doubtless are; but this is the general fact. It is a common remark, when a giddy youth is converted,—and "plucked as a brand from the burning," that he owes it, under God, to the prayers and early religious instruction of his pi-

ous *mother*, now in heaven. And to what source does he himself trace back those religious impressions, which cling to him, as an element of his moral being, and which he could never shake off for an hour, in the midst of all his thoughtlessness and folly? "What would have become of me, he exclaims, when he comes to himself, if it had not been for the prayers and pious teaching and bright christian example of my sainted mother? I was inattentive to her instructions, often impatient; and sometimes I contrived to steal away and avoid them; but they have followed me "like a conscience." I still feel her warm hand upon my forehead, when she had laid me down so comfortably for the night, in my little bed. I hear her soft voice, as she bent over my pillow, and fervently commended me to the watchman of Israel who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. The tears which dropped, when she was pleading with the Angel of the covenant for her boy, still seem warm upon my cheek. I can never be thankful enough to God for committing me to the arms and the training of such a mother. But for the religious impressions which I carried

along with me from the nursery and the fire-side, I might have been lured by wicked companions into the foulest haunts of dissipation. I might have become a bacchanal, a profane swearer and a sabbath breaker and lost my soul—I probably should; but my mother held me back—my mother saved me."

This is no fancy sketch. It is the affectionate and grateful testimony of hundreds and of thousands, in remembrance of their indebtedness to their pious mothers.

Nor these alone. How often has the bitter lamentation been heard from the gallows, "O that I had listened to the advice and warnings and prayers of my mother! But too well I remember them. O that I could forget them all forever! but they are burnt into my conscience, and are still burning, deeper and deeper. Could my mother have saved me from crime and ignominy, I had not been here. But having first broken her heart, I must die the death of a felon."

Facts like these speak for themselves, and they cannot be controverted. However it may be accounted for, the pious instructions and prayers

of mothers are longer remembered than those of fathers; and do vastly more to mold the hearts and consciences of every generation. I do not say these things to praise the dead, or flatter the living. Every truly christian mother will lament, that she has not been more faithful to God and to "the children whom he hath given her;" but so far as early religious education is concerned, there is no blessing so great to a rising family, as an intelligent, discreet and pious mother. She is endowed by nature, with some qualifications, and is favored with some advantages, which are peculiar to her sex. The domestic circle is the sphere, which by the wise allotments of providence, woman is destined to fill, and which she alone can adorn. She has instincts for catching the first sweet dawn of intellect, and for imparting instruction to the opening mind, which man does not possess, and which for such a purpose, are far superior to all his masculine endowments. In the fullest and gentlest flow of paternal love, he is in danger of chilling those little budding germs which unfold so fast in the sunshine of a mother's smiles. His touch is too rough and heavy. He

can command—he can reason—he can wrestle in the campus, and thunder in the forum—he can smite the anvil, and climb the mast, and hurl the battle axe—he can dig in the mines and soar among the stars—he can instruct in the arts and sciences, and curb the waywardness of youth, but he cannot braid the silken locks of the nursery. He can bark or girdle the sturdy sapling, but to bend the tender twig, so as not to break or injure it, requires a softer hand than his. With but few exceptions, a mother can begin to impart religious instruction to a child, much earlier than a father; and the earliest period when it is capable of receiving such instruction, is perhaps the most important of any. There are no impressions like *first* impressions. I pity the child, the boy or the girl, who has not enjoyed the earliest teaching, as well as caresses of a pious and faithful mother. The loss cannot be repaid.

And as mothers are by natural tact and quickness of perception, as well as depth and tenderness of feeling, better qualified than fathers to commence the responsible task of family education, so the divine allotment which keeps them

chiefly at home, gives them other peculiar advantages. Fathers cannot be much in the nursery if they would, without neglecting their duties abroad and subjecting themselves to the rebuke of an inspired Apostle, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." During the greater part of almost every day, they must be engaged in their secular business and of course absent from their families. In the morning, at noon and at night, their little ones may have opportunity to prattle in their ears and climb upon their knees, and as I have before remarked, they are bound to give all the instruction they can, during these intervals of their toils. But as the duties and cares of mothers, lie almost exclusively within doors, and their children are always about them, they can avail themselves of favorable incidents and of leisure moments as they occur, and also of those hours when they are busy with their needles at the fire-side, to give "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little." And who

can tell how much may be done in this way, by a christian mother, within the six or eight years, that her children are rarely out of her sight for more than an hour or two at a time. Eternity alone can fully disclose what has been done by thousands, who are now with their redeemed offspring in the great family above.

It is delightful to think, what an influence a pious, sensible and well-educated mother is exerting, whose heart is set on training up her precious charge for usefulness and for heaven—whose instructions "drop as the rain, whose speech distils as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." While her closet witnesses the sincerity and fervency of her stated devotions, in which her children are particularly and often individually remembered, she bears them continually on her heart, when she is engaged in her domestic avocations. Many times in a day, in her best frames, do her desires ascend to heaven in ejaculatory prayer, for their salvation, and for wisdom and grace to bring them up in the fear and service of God. Observe such a mother, as she

daily irradiates the family circle by her bright christian example, and recommends religion to her children by habitual cheerfulness in the discharge of her many and exhausting house-hold duties. See with what sweet maternal attractions, she allures her young Samuels and Benjamins from their infantile sports, and draws them around her to hear some interesting story, like that of Joseph in the pit, or Moses among the bulrushes, or Jesus in the manger, till their eyes are alternately filled with tears and sparkle with delight. Hear them, as they sit by her side, while she is busy with their ward-robes, lisping their sweet little hymns and verses, and asking her to teach them others equally sweet and beautiful. When the evening shuts in, and the hour for their being in bed arrives, follow her with a light step to the door of the nursery, and listen while they kneel and repeat their prayers and hymns from her lips, and she breaths out her own fervent supplications that God will hear, protect and bless them. As they grow older, and the native depravity of their hearts is more and more clearly developed, see how her solici-

tude for their early conversion and eternal well-being increases, how patiently she instructs them in the catechism and the Bible, and how earnestly she prays with and for them, especially on the sabbath, when most of her ordinary family cares and duties are suspended. When they are old enough to go from home to school, or to an apprentice-ship, witness her maternal yearnings; see how carefully she puts up the Bible with their other books and their clothing, and with what pious advice she sends them away. And then, could you read her letters, and know how her heart goes out after them, and hear her secret pleadings with God for them, who could help saying, the price of such a mother, is indeed above rubies. Her children will rise up and call her blessed. How can they refrain from it? Even should any of them prove "reprobate children," they will feel constrained to bless her, on their way to prison or the gallows.

I cannot do full justice to the subject before us, without adding, that while the domestic circle is her appropriate sphere of influence, a virtuous and pious woman has sympathies and kind

offices for others, as well as her own family; especially for the poor, the ignorant, the sick, and the afflicted. That love which is the fulfilling of the law, cannot be confined to her own fire-side. Dearly as she loves her own household, she has a heart, and many a kind office for her neighbors. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." She visits as she has health and opportunity, "the widows and the fatherless in their afflictions." She inquires kindly into their necessities, and is ever ready to minister to their relief. As long as she lives, her happiness chiefly consists in making others happy. And when after she is gone, her pious sisters who have been associated with her in offices of benevolence, "show the coats and the garments which she made" for the poor, they can say of her in the language of Job, "When the ear heard her, then it blessed her, and when the eye saw her, it gave witness unto her. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, and she caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is above

rubies. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but *a woman that feareth the Lord* she shall be praised."

The subject of this discourse shows

In the *first* place, the inestimable privilege of being educated by a discreet and intelligent christian mother. It may be many years before her children begin to appreciate the privelege. Some of them may even be restive under her pious instructions, and the restraints which she gently, but firmly imposes. Nevertheless, to be religiously brought up, under the eye, and as it were in the bosom of such a mother, is a blessing compared with which rank, and titles, and affluence are but the gilded baubles of the nursery. It were infinitely better to be born and reared under the humblest roof, with the advantages of pious maternal instruction and prayers, than to be educated in king's palaces without them. I am persuaded, that if it were possible to come at the history of all the families of the earth, through all ages, it would be found, that the great majority of eminently wise and good men, have been the children of pious mothers;

and that we should be surprised to find how few children of such mothers, compared with the whole number, have turned out prodigals in the end. The mere fact, that when one of them abandons himself to an idle and wicked life, the case is so much talked of, proves, that it is a rare exception to the general rule. The confident hope which I entertain, that all the families of the earth will ere long be converted, rests more upon the known and acknowledged influence of christian mothers, than upon any other human instrumentality, except the preaching of the gospel. If there is one individual present, who has had such a mother, and is not thankful to God for the blessing, let him tremble. I fear he is nigh unto cursing, and that his end will be destruction.

2. It is interesting to observe, in connection with the remark just made, that eminently devoted and faithful christian mothers, commonly reap a rich reward in the present life. None but a parent can know, how great the joy is, of "seeing children walking in the truth." A mother that has done her duty faithfully in the

fear of God, and in reliance upon his promises, may be almost sure, that, if her children are spared, she will have affectionate bosoms and strong arms to lean upon, when "the keepers of the house tremble" and "those that look out of the windows are darkened." There may be a reprobate, so godless, and thankless, that he will not reverence and sustain the mother who bore him, and watched over him in his infancy, and did every thing she could, to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but if there be such an one, I do not wish to see him. He is a monster.

3. How great, in view of our subject, is the loss, when, in the meridian of life, a virtuous and pious woman, the head of a family, is removed by the stroke of death! How great to her husband, to her children, to the poor, the sick and the afflicted; to the circle of mourning friends whom she leaves behind, and to the church of which she was a member and an ornament. It is the loss of her society, her counsels, her sympathies, her instructions, her example, her charities and her prayers. Her children

may be too young to realize it; her friends may be consoled with the hope, that she has gone from a bed of pain to her "everlasting rest," and the majority even of her acquaintances may be too busy or too thoughtless to lay it to heart; but the death of one such woman is a great public as well as private loss, and will be so regarded by every serious and reflecting mind. And yet, blessed be God, though removed to a better world, she is not entirely lost to this. She still lives in the efficacy of her many prayers, in the hearts of her friends, and in her bright christian example. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

4. No child will ever forget the tenderness, the self-sacrifices, the instructions, and the prayers of a truly christian and faithful mother. Seduced by wicked companions, and urged on by passion and appetite, a reckless son, may indeed *disregard* all these, and trample them under his feet; but he cannot *forget* them. It is out of his power. Spurn them from him as he may, they will come back when he least expects them, to embitter and turn his sweetest sinful indulg-

ences into gall and wormwood. If he persists to the end in his wicked career, they will be sure to come thronging about his death bed, and thence they will follow him to "his own place," and torment him forever and ever. "While life, and thought, and being last," he cannot forget them. Memory is as undying as the soul itself. And O, to be haunted through everlasting ages, by the tears and expostulations of a sainted mother!

5. How joyful will be the meeting between pious mothers and their redeemed offspring in heaven. O with what divine rapture will they look up to "Him that sitteth upon the throne," and say, "here am I and the children whom thou hast given me." And while the children ascribe all the glory of their salvation "to him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and hath made them kings and priests unto God and his Father," how loudly and sweetly will they praise him, for giving them such mothers. There is Moses, that child of prayer and faith, who, when he was born, was hid three months by his mother, and then com-

mitted to the care of her covenant keeping God, in an ark of bulrushes. There is Hannah and her beloved Samuel, whom she "gave to the Lord all the days of his life." There too is Timothy, and his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois, to whose pious instructions he was indebted for the knowledge which he had while yet a child, of the holy scriptures. And what shall I more say? The time would fail me to tell of that great company of pious and joyful mothers, who will meet their ransomed children before "the throne of God and the Lamb," and unite with them in the eternal song of redeeming love.

6. The theme of this discourse, and these shrouded obsequies, affectingly remind us of the great loss which we have just sustained. A wife, a daughter, a mother, a sister, a friend, has finished her course, and fallen asleep, at the age of *thirty-seven*. She is now at rest. The coughing and panting and sinking are all over. Had she been suddenly arrested, in the meridian of life and usefulness, by some accute disease, how could we have parted with her? But wasting

and lingering so long between life and death as she was, and earnestly desiring to depart and be with Christ as she did, we would not have detained her beyond the appointed day, if we could. Why should a sick daughter, who longs to go home, be hindered an hour, when her father comes for her.

Knowing as you do, how strongly we were attached to the deceased, and that I have been intimately acquainted with her for so many years, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, you may perhaps expect me to delineate her character, and speak of her virtues, somewhat in the style of a glowing obituary. If I refrain, it is not for want of materials. They are ample; they are rich, and will be garnered up by those who knew and loved her best. I could say much; but I know what her views and wishes were, and they are sacred. I seem at this moment to see her finger upon her lips, warning me that my words should be few, and carefully chosen. I stand before God; in what other invisible presence I know not. Who can tell, but that her pure

and happy emancipated spirit, may be hovering over us, during these solemnities?

I could say much, in praise of our departed friend, as a wife, a mother, a daughter, a neighbor, a christian: and the last clause of my text, "A woman that feareth the Lord she shall be *praised*," would seem to allow, if not to require me, to hold up her bright example and immortal hopes, before the sorrowing wives and mothers of her extensive acquaintance. But it is added by the pen of inspiration, in the next verse, "Give her of the fruit of her hand, and let her *own works* praise her in the gates." Let me rather, therefore, in accordance with the spirit of the whole context write, "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, from hence forth; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their *labors* and their *works* do follow them."

With the seeds of that most insidious and wasting of all diseases, in her constitution, which made her motherless at two years of age, Mrs. Fiske lived much longer than she expected to live. Ten years ago, she looked upon herself as in a sure decline; and as she said, was greatly

surprised when she found, as the spring opened, that she was slowly recovering. Her delicate frame, as you well know, was animated by a remarkably buoyant and active spirit. I have often thought as I looked at her, so thin and almost ready to vanish away, that her perennial cheerfulness, was the only thing that kept down the disease, which had been so long threatening her life, and I now believe, that she would have died years ago, had she been of a gloomy temperament. The elasticity of her ethereal spirit imparted a recuperative vitality to her physical system, which it was hard for disease to master. But the "last enemy," though kept at bay, was not to be foiled.

For several months past, it has been Mrs. Fiske's settled conviction, as it has also been but too evident to her friends, that her life was drawing to a close. With what calmness and good judgment, she set her house in order, and made every arrangement for her departure—how tender and faithful were her dying counsels and farewells—with what composure, cheerfulness and even desire, she spoke of her approaching

dissolution—how fervent and touching were her many prayers—what a deep sense she had of her own indwelling sinfulness, and how earnestly she desired to be perfectly sanctified—to be made "holy as God is holy, and pure as Christ is pure," will long be remembered by her mourning family, and those other friends, whose privilege it was, to be with her in her last sickness.

When all other fears had been banished by that "hope, which is as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast," one fear still lingered—it was, that the final struggle might be protracted and agonizing. But as the time drew nigh, this fear, also, was taken away by her merciful Saviour; and when the last enemy so long expected actually came, so light was his tread, that she did not perceive his approach. Before entering her chamber, he laid aside all badges of the "King of terrors," and instead of leading her roughly through "the valley of the shadow of death" and plunging her into the cold flood, he bore her so gently and quickly over, she did not know that she had even come to the brink of the river, till, as we humbly and thankfully trust, she found herself

"clothed upon" and entering the gate of the "celestial city." There was no dying struggle, and scarcely a moment's warning to those who were about her. She sweetly fell asleep, like an infant upon its mother's bosom. Her eyes, which up to that moment had retained their brightness—

> Set, as sets the morning star, which goes
> Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
> Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
> But melts away into the light of heaven.

We mourn not for her; but there are those here to-day, who while they receive our warmest sympathies, claim our fervent prayers.

Here is the stricken husband, whose heart is rent in twain, and whose house is left desolate. "Have pity upon me, O ye my friends," is the appeal of his silent grief, "have pity upon me, for the hand of God hath touched me." He will need, and I am sure will highly value the prayers of his christian friends, not only to-day and to-morrow, but for a great while to come.

Here are the bereaved children. They have lost a mother, and such a mother! What can I say more? She committed them confidingly to

the care of her covenant God and Saviour, and he will not be "slack concerning any of his promises;" but their loss is far greater than they can at present realize. They will no more sit and kneel by her side, to hear her instructions, counsels and prayers. They must henceforth go on the journey of life, without her beaming eye and gentle hand to lead them.

Guide them, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrims through this barren land,
They are weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold them with thy powerful hand.

"Think ye of her, who knew so well,
Your tender thoughts to guide;
Who could to wisdom's sacred lore,
Your fixed attention claim;
Ah never from your hearts erase,
That blessed mother's name.
Go say the prayer she taught,
Beside your little bed,
The lips that used to bless you there,
Are silent with the dead."

Here is the aged and sorrowing father. She was his only child. He had not another. His heart was bound up in her. With her, as he fondly anticipated, was he to find his last earthly

home. His cherished hope and desire was, that her hand, of all others, might close his dying eyes —that her prayers, of all others, might be the last sound that should die away upon his ear. But no. The daughter is taken, and the father, in his grief and his gray hairs, is left. How anxiously will she watch for his coming from the heights of the blessed! He needs, and I am sure he will be thankful for the prayers of all who loved her, that he may be prepared to meet and dwell with her forever in heaven.

Finally; there are other mourning relations and friends present and absent, who will need the consolations of the religion which she professed and adorned, and which made her dying bed so soft and joyful. Let us, therefore, fervently "commend them," one and all, "to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

The following OBITUARY NOTICE was published in the *Boston Recorder.*

"The scripture saith not in vain" that "the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." It seems to be a duty, therefore, when they "have finished their course and kept the faith," not merely to announce their departure, but to "magnify the grace of God that was in them," by some fitting memorial of their Christian virtues and dying thoughts.

To the friends and intimate acquaintances of Mrs. Deborah W. V. Fiske, whose lamented death, on the 19th of February, has already been announced in the Recorder, and especially to those who enjoyed the privilege of being with her in her last sickness, the following sketch will not unlikely seem to want the filling up and verisimiltude of the likeness which is indelibly

imprinted upon their own minds. But they will doubtless agree with the writer, that it is better and safer in such cases to fall short of the original, than to go beyond it.

Of Mrs. Fiske's childhood, suffice it to say, that having lost her pious and devoted mother, when she was scarcely two years old, she found other warm maternal bosoms to lean upon, especially one, whose tender care she often spoke of with fervent gratitude to her heavenly Father, as well as of the religious education which she received, and which she ever regarded as the crowning blessing of her early life.

Full of life and glee, and with ample means for the gratification of all her desires, she was fast ripening into womanhood under the bright sunshine, and promising herself a world of happiness in what she then looked upon as the innocent pleasures of youth, when she was startled from this dream of earthly bliss, during a revival of religion in Park street Church, Boston. Her convictions of sin and utter unprofitableness were deep and searching. It was a long and doubtful struggle, as the writer has heard her say; but as she hoped, and as all her friends believed, grace triumphed. In due time she united with the church, and having much leisure upon her hands, she devoted herself with untiring assiduity to

those nameless offices of Christian benevolence, for which a populous city furnishes so wide a range, till her marriage with the Rev. NATHAN W. FISKE, of Amherst College, in 1828.

This introduced her into a new sphere of usefulness; and how well she filled and adorned it, as a wife, as a mother, as a friend, as a neighbor, as a Christian, will long be remembered by all who knew her. She was deeply interested in the prosperity of the College; and it will be among the tenderest recollections of many a graduate, "I was sick and she visited me." Her heart and her hand were ever open to the calls of charity. The poor, the sick, the widow and the fatherless, will better know what a friend they have lost, as the occasions recur which used to bring her, or something from her, to their doors, than they can realize so soon after her death. Endowed by nature with extraordinary vivacity, her countenance always wore a smile, which was peculiarly her own, wherever she went. She was so kind, so cheerful, so full of sympathy and benevolence, that you could hardly help forgetting your pains and troubles, whatever they might be, and feeling yourself better when she was gone. Her perception of all the proprieties of life, was remarkably quick and delicate. With a rich and highly cultivated mind,

she had in her familiar intercourse with her friends all the simplicity and playfulness of a child; and if her wit was as keen as the blade of Damascus, she was as sparing in the use of it, as the most scrupulous and pious of her acquaintances could desire.

Mrs. Fiske never flattered herself with the hope of long life. She had but too many premonitions of that insidious and ever wasting disease of our climate which so early deprived her of her mother, to look beyond the meridian for the going down of her sun. Again and again was her life threatened, and in her own view hastening to a close ere she had reached the age of thirty; but such was the buoyancy of her spirits, so spontaneous was her habitual cheerfulness in spite of all her pulmonary attacks, that it seemed as if the disease could not make its usual progress; and the writer believes, that but for these brisk and perennial circulations, the seeds of it would have ripened years earlier than they did. Early in the last autumn, her symptoms became more decidedly alarming than they had ever been before, and by the middle of winter it was apparent, that her end was approaching. She saw it as soon, and as distinctly as any of her friends, and spoke of it more calmly.

Always distrustful of the evidences of her own

piety, which appeared highly satisfactory to others, she entered with much prayer and no little trembling upon a course of searching self-examination, in the progress of which that light broke in upon her mind with new splendor, which "shone more and more unto the perfect day." Weak as she was, she conversed much upon the subject of her departure; and those friends who were daily with her during the last weeks of her decline, will ever remember it as one of their greatest earthly privileges. Such patience, such cheerfulness, such pious counsels and reflections, such fervent prayers as they witnessed and heard in that dying chamber, and which formed so striking a contrast to common death-bed scenes, they can never forget.

As her end approached, Mrs. Fiske made all her arrangements, and distributed the nameless tokens of her affection with as much judgment and composure as if she had been in perfect health and setting out upon a long journey. Nothing was forgotten; and it can hardly be said that there was ever a momentary shade upon her intellect till she ceased to breathe. Towards the last, her Bible, which had long been precious to her soul, was the only book she wished for as an aid to her meditations and prayers; and the Epistle to the Hebrews seemed to occupy her

dying thoughts more than any other portion of the sacred volume. She dwelt particularly upon the *eleventh verse* of the *second chapter*, where Christ is spoken of as a *Sanctifier*. If in thinking of her family, she was "in a strait betwixt two," she "desired to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." She longed to be delivered "from the body of this death," that she might be made "holy as God is Holy, and pure as Christ is pure."

In looking forward to her dissolution, the last fear that disquieted her mind was, that she might die a hard death. But when her Master called for her, so gently did he lead her through "the valley of the shadow of death," that she was not aware of being in it, till the valley and the ford of Jordan were both passed; and, as we trust, she entered "the new Jerusalem, with songs and everlasting joy upon her head." There was not a struggle, nor a groan. Like a confiding child in the arms of its mother, she fell sweetly asleep. Death indeed was present, for she ceased to breathe; but with a step so light that she did not hear it; with a touch so gentle that she did not perceive it. Who will not pray, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?"

FAVORITE HYMNS.

Affliction Sweetened.—TOPLADY.

WHEN languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond my pains,
And long to fly away.

Sweet to look inward, and attend
The whispers of his love;
Sweet to look upward to the place
Where Jesus pleads above.

Sweet to reflect, how grace divine
My sins on Jesus laid;
Sweet to remember that his blood
My debt of suff'ring paid.

Sweet on his faithfulness to rest,
Whose love can never end;
Sweet on his covenant of grace
For all things to depend.

Sweet, in the confidence of faith,
To trust his firm decrees;
Sweet to lie passive in his hand,
And know no will but his.

If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be,
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from thee!

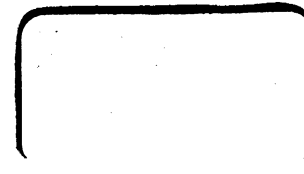
Sufficiency of the Atonement.—COWPER

There is a fountain, filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain, in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

Thou dying Lamb! thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are saved, to sin no more.

Since first by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be, till I die.

And when this feeble, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave—
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save.

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